Volume 4, Issue 36   Atari Online News, Etc.   September 6, 2002

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Mark Duckworth
Fred Horvat
Trevor Spencer
R. Wayne Arenz

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->From the Editor's Keyboard   "Saying it like it is!"
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Thanks to a couple of our longtime readers, I've started to wonder whether
or not I've entered some kind of Star Trek-ish time portal! Or, has mankind
started to de-evolutionize to the Dark Ages? I really don't know! What,
you may be asking yourself, is this lunatic talking about? Okay, I guess I
have to answer that question before I have myself committed by the majority
of our readers! Would you believe that a non-Third World country - in its
infinite wisdom to crack down on internet gaming - has banned the use and
possession of ALL electronic games?!

Yes, this topic should probably be talked about in our gaming section, but
I'm too flabbergasted to scroll down - I have to get this off my chest now!
Maybe I misread my history books during my school years, but it was always
my impression that Greece was one of the hotbeds for modern civilization.
Math, science, philosophy, etc. were practically born in Greece. So what
happened to the Greeks? Is there a supply of "Stupid Pills" going through
the government? Are these people over-zealous politicians trying to save
Greek society from the electronic games craze; or do they really believe
these laws will prevent internet gaming? Either way - they're idiots (and I
apologize to anyone of Greek heritage)! Imagine going to jail or paying a
hefty fine for playing Pac-Man on a PC! Playing with a PlayStation could
send your kids away for years! Maybe these politicians think the gamblers
will die from uncontrollable fits of laughter! I'm just amazed at the
lengths governments will go to in order to protect people from their own
choices.

I'm actually hoping that this is some sort of hoax and I fell for it. But
the two online sources I saw appeared to be legitimate European newspaper
sites. I'm actually surprised that the story hasn't [yet] been picked up in
the American media; I'm dying to hear what others have to say about this. I
can't wait to learn more!

So, other than that, things have started to settle down around here. The
weather has been typically seasonal for New England. Labor Day arrives,
marking the unofficial change in seasons. It's cooler - at least lately -
and certainly much more enjoyable being outside. We closed the pool over
the weekend - our unofficial ritual to mark the end of summer. I have a few
projects being worked on for inside the house now that I can open windows
and not roast or freeze in doing so. It'll be a couple of months before I
have to worry about cleaning up leaves; and yard work will be kept to a

minimum during the cooler temperatures. A nice break from that work!
Schools are opening up as we speak, so things will be quieter in the
neighborhood. The annual "rites of passage" are again upon us. Life goes
on - unless you're living in Greece!

Until next time...

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                         Octopus BBS Released

Hello everyone,

Exciting moment for me, Octopus BBS with internet support has been
released. Soon we should see some Atari BBS here or there that are telnet
BBS's. Also Koos (the original author) has released Octopus BBS as
freeware now! Octopus is now the most up-to-date, most feature filled,
completely free BBS package for Atari! Users can expect regular updates
now, feature requests can be submitted to me. I plan on keeping up with
this for a long time. In order to get your hands on it, head over to the
atari-source.com portal at http://atari-source.com.

PS: This could not be possible without the amazing generosity of the
original author, and the help of several people in #atariscne on ircnet
including but not limited to some random questions Mr. Pink of reservoir
gods has answered ;-)   Thank you!

--
Mark
 - http://atari-source.com
 - Tower F030 w/ Ethernet, 2 Tower MSTes, 2 Jaguars, 1 Jaguar toilet unit,
   1 Lynx, 1 Tower TT030 w/Nova and Catterman.

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""

              2002 Annual Atari Swap and Sale - Columbus, OH USA

2002 *** Atari Enthusiasts of Columbus, Ohio Annual Swap and Sale *** 2002
All Atari, used computing and game platforms, electronics, etc. are invited

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It's been another very nice week here in
the northeast. I don't know if it's going to continue, but it's really
been quite comfortable despite a night of thunder storms.

This week, my intro is going to be sort of a 'stream of consciousness'
thing, so bear with me.

Some of you may remember that I recently purchased a Macintosh
PowerBook. It's a really cool machine. The only thing that I wasn't
crazy about (aside from not being to run Linux on it right away) was
the fact that it 'only' had a 40 gigabyte hard drive. Of course, I split
the drive into several partitions for the time when I CAN run Linux on
it, and that leaves me 20 gigabytes for the Mac's native operating
system... OS X.

OS X is, excuse the terminology, a pig. It's resource intensive in just
about any category that I can think of. It's trying to be as much like
Windows as it can while still being able to say that it's different.

Different is good. It keeps us from being too comfortable. It keeps us
thinking. Let's face it, most people wouldn't think at all if it wasn't
absolutely necessary.

Anyway... the hard drive. I find it amusing that people so casually
speak of "only" <fill in the blank> gigabytes. I can still remember the
first hard drive I ever bought. It was a 60 Meg Supra Drive that cost me
about eight hundred bucks and took up almost half as much room as the
entire computer. It was noisy, it ran hot, and it took forever to format
or partition the thing. But back then it seemed like a miracle. Of
course, my dealer (back then, there actually WERE Atari dealers) told me
that I was nuts for buying a 60 Meg hard drive. "No one is ever going to
use sixty megabytes! That's a huge amount of storage!"

How things change, huh? Well, since I wanted to max out the capabilities
of this machine before I got too much important stuff on the hard drive,
I bought a 60 gig sucker and prepared to install it.

Anyone who's ever done work on the inside of a Stacy knows how complicated and annoying it was to do. I personally swore off ever going into that nightmare again... and I swore it off five or six times! <grin>

Most laptops today, however, make it fairly easy to replace things like hard drives. The PowerBook, for instance, is held together by eight screws (which, unlike the Stacy, are all of the same type). The bottom of the case slides away, and the hard drive is held in by several more screws, which are the same size as the ones that hold the case together.

In ten minutes time I had opened the case, removed the old hard drive, installed the new one, and closed everything up again. In the first ten minutes of taking the Stacy apart, I would have been lucky to have FOUND all of the screws that had to be removed.

And yet, even with all of the technological advances that the past ten years have seen, I still enjoy using TOS on my 1040, Stacy, or TT more than any other computer I've ever owned. Sure, the OS wasn't as fancy as what's available today, even though it was the hottest thing going in its day. But it did what I needed it to do with ease and with style without being overblown. You didn't need a month of classes to teach you how to use TOS. Even MagiC seems like "just too much" to me. Don't get me wrong, it's slick. It's easy to use and pretty darned sharp looking. But the truth is that I just don't need a lot of the stuff that it's got to offer. None of this is an endorsement of or a slap at any operating system. If an OS offers the options you need and you're willing to pay whatever price in overhead it carries with it, then by all means go for it.

Now comes the "stream of consciousness" stuff. I mentioned earlier that most people wouldn't think unless it was absolutely necessary. I don't know if it's because the weather is so nice, or because it's too warm, or because people really are getting dumber, but there're a lot of profoundly stupid people out there. It seems that the concept of "cause and effect" is suddenly too complex to be understood without special training. Pay attention the next time you go the supermarket or building supply store or at a party, and you'll soon see that people just don't "get" the concept anymore.

The woman that steps off of the curb without looking for traffic and then looks amazed and offended that she was almost hit by a bicyclist. The guy in the car in the next lane talking on his cell phone AND holding a cup of coffee when he decides that the laws of physics don't apply to him and that he can move into the next lane even though your car is obviously occupying the space at the present moment. The shopper who takes the box from the bottom of the "box pyramid" and is then startled at the amazing affect of that demon force explained by Sir Isaac Newton, gravity.

I could go on and on, but I'm sure that you could too, so I won't. Just make sure that while you're paying attention to these people that you don't become one of them. Hey, we need all the non-zombies we can get. It may have been a meteorite that wiped out the dinosaurs, but it'll probably be our own stupidity that wipes us out unless we're careful.

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips and so forth from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
===================================

Joseph Place asks about Cubase:

"Does anyone know of a good site to go to for info or a tutorial on
Cubase Audio Falcon? The manual is just not helping me much. I'm not
even sure that everything is there (I bought it used). I think I
basically have all of my hardware working correctly now, and I can
record tracks fine. Now I need to know how to pan, EQ, add effects and
mix things down to a stereo file. I am trying to figure out the mixer
maps with no success. Please help!"

Wayne Martz tells Joseph:

"Sorry it has taken me awhile to respond to your message. I've learned
quite a bit about the things you've mentioned, and will be happy to
help, although I'm a bit busy right now. My Falcon is at my home studio,
so I'll look at the mixer maps and get back to you about setting them up
properly. I know that each controller in the mixer map must be assigned
properly to have any affect on the recorded track. More later!"

Joshua Kaijankoski adds:

"Try this site: http://www.holmerup.com/index2.html "

Peter West posts:

"I thought (some) readers might be interested in a couple of problems
I've just had with unZIPping an archive and then copying one of the
files:

I was sent a MIMed/ZIPped file of a beta program as an attachment. It
deMIMed fine, but trying to extract the ZIP in Arcview, UNZIP540 and
2-in-1/ZIPJR failed, with a message such as:

Archive: K:\LUNA210B.ZIP creating: Luna210beta4515/ checkdir error:
cannot create Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL unable to process
Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL/. checkdir error: cannot create
Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL unable to process
Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL/ASSEMBLR.KRZ. checkdir error: cannot create
Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL unable to process
Luna210beta4515/KUERZEL/A_HTML.KRZ. ...... etc. for all other files.
(See below *)

So I extracted it to a compatibly-formatted SyQuest EZ135 on my son's PC
under Windows XP - twice to be sure, once from the MIM and once from the
ZIP. Both worked fine. But when I transferred the EZ135 cart to my
Falcon, I found I could not copy one of the files (the APP) though the
rest of the files copied fine. Attempting to copy the APP caused the
computer to freeze. So did an attempt to compare the two extractions in
Egale and double-clicking the APP on the EZ135. I had to reboot each
time to get the computer to work. This was both under MagiC/NVDI and
also under plain TOS4.01.

Thinking there might be a disk fault, I first checked the disk structure
with CORRECT.PRG and DISKUS and when no fault was found extracted the
archive a total of 6 times to different folders on the EZ135. No joy -
all behaved the same way on the Falcon.

Furthermore, I found that though I could load the file into a hex editor
that loaded only one cluster at a time, such as the Harlekin Monitor and
Diskus, and scroll right through to the end, attempting to load it into
HexEdit, which loads the whole file at once, failed once more. So did
trying to open it as a binary in Egale or Look'n See. Apparently I could
open it cluster by cluster, but not all at once. It wasn't that big -
under 500 kB - and I have around 10 MB of working memory free on the
14MB Falcon.

Next I tried copying the file on the PC from its directory to the root.
That worked fine on the PC. But again I couldn't copy or open it on the
Atari! I was about to give up when I had one more try. I copied it from
the cart to a floppy on the PC and voila! All was well!!! The Atari
accepted it without problems.

I have never heard of such behaviour before. Does anyone have an
explanation?

*) Later, I found that the ZIP problem on the Falcon was due to not
having had LFNs enabled on the partition I was extracting to :-(Once I
had switched them on in VFATCONF, everything extracted fine and the
resultant APP file worked OK and could be copied. Now I can understand
why the lack of LFNs caused problems on extraction with such a looooong
outer folder name. But this was the only LFN in the archive, so why on
earth couldn't I copy the file?"

Edward Baiz tells Peter:

"Was this an Atari file? Strange reaction. Did the person that sent you
the zipped file zip it on a PC or an Atari. I was thinking that if it
was zipped on a current version of Winzip, that maybe something was done
that it made hard to read by our older Atari versions of zip. I have
never had this problem with Arcview before, but I did have similar
problems with STZip."

Michael Robillard asks about an error he gets when running CAB:

"While running Cab 2.8 on my Falcon the program will lock up and the
following message will appear in the upper left of my monitor

Runtime error 163 at offset $0004CAE6

What can I do to prevent this from happening?"

Edward Baiz tells Michael:

"Do you get the runtime error when Cab first comes up or when you try to
go to to a website? What Cab.ovl file are you using and what version? It
also may be something else in memory. Try taking all programs out of
memory that Cab does not need. Now and then I get the runtime error, but
not too often."

Raoul Teulings asks for help with newsgroup messages:

"After using E-tool something weird happened: all the collected messages
in the CSAST are replaced by ones that start with strange signs and
cannot be opened anymore. Which is not the worst: they cannot be deleted
either...Has somebody a cure for this?"

Lannie Schafroth tells Raoul:

"Yours is the first post in any newsgroup ever with the words "etool"
and "Atari"! So maybe all others who tried this tool messed up there
newsreaders so hard they could never post a question how to fix the
problem. Consider yourself lucky! :-)

Seriously, what on earth is an "e-tool"?"

Well folks, that's it for this time around. I know it's short, but
people must be out and about enjoying the wonderful weather and
neglecting the UseNet, since there was a marked drop in postings this
week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to
listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PlayStation 3 Out in 2005?
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""""   Greece Bans ALL Electronic Games!
                                    Kirby To Be A Star??? Nude Gaming?!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                 Sony PlayStation 3 Seen Out of the Box by 2005

While Sony Corp (basks in the success of its PlayStation 2 in the $30
billion-plus-a-year videogame market, expectations are rising that its
successor will be out of the box by 2005, in an entirely different form.

Sony remains tight-lipped about the timing of the next generation's debut,
but it is dropping some hints about the product's likely shape -- or more
accurately, lack of shape.

"We're not thinking about hardware," said Kenichi Fukunaga, spokesman for Sony Computer Entertainment (SCE), the Sony subsidiary that develops and makes the PlayStation.

"The ideal solution would be having an operating system installed in various home appliances that could run game programs," he said.

Fueling expectations of a 2005 target date is a microchip project among SCE, Toshiba Corp, Japan's largest chipmaker and co-producer of the PlayStation 2's complex microprocessor, and International Business Machines Corp.

The four-year project, codenamed "cell" and due for completion in spring 2005, aims to create a powerful processor for home electronics with ultra-fast Internet connections that could, for example, transmit high-resolution moving pictures.

"It's possible PlayStation 3 would come out in 2005, since that's when Sony's cell project will yield something," said Kazuharu Miura, an analyst at Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd.

He added that, by 2005, Japan's broadband infrastructure for high-speed Internet service would be largely complete and Sony would likely have a clearer idea of what kind of online games people want to play.

SCE said it had not decided how to integrate the cell processor into its next game console, but the general idea was to use the chip in Internet servers and home electronics to divide computing tasks among networked machines.

This would give the devices as much processing power as a supercomputer, such as IBM's "Deep Blue" machine that defeated Gary Kasparov at chess, and enable them to handle everything from games to video recording to downloading data from the Internet.

"We've started with boxes -- making boxes to do specific things, but if you have a chip this powerful you can add functions to any box. It's reverse thinking," said SCE's Fukunaga.

PlayStation 2, with more than 33 million machines sold since its launch in March 2000, has dwarfed sales of rival consoles released last year: Microsoft Corp's Xbox and Nintendo Ltd's GameCube.

But the competition looks unlikely to let Sony have the next generation all to itself.

In July, the Wall Street Journal reported that Microsoft was considering launching a new game machine in 2003 or 2004 that would cost about $500 and be able to pause live TV and record programs onto a hard drive.

Sony earlier this week launched a home video recorder with just those functions, the first product in its Cocoon line of home electronics that will hook up to the Internet.

                    Nintendo to Make Kirby Into Big Star

Kirby's finally hitting the big time.

After a decade of relative obscurity, he's starring in a new TV show. His Web site is generating thousands of visits a week. And he has teams of people plotting his every move and word.

All this for a blob the color of Pepto-Bismol?

You bet.

Nintendo of America, the company that unleashed the Mario and Pokemon phenomena, is hoping to do the same with Kirby, the protagonist of dozens of Nintendo video games. Redmond-based Nintendo plans to spend $10 million over the next two years turning the Pink One into a worldwide superstar.

"Kirby: Right Back at Ya!" debuts Sept. 14 on Fox (9 a.m. and 11 a.m. EDT).

Nintendo knows the power of a personality. The cast of characters that starred in Pokemon games spawned a huge following that not only boosted sales of its games and hardware, but has translated into $15 billion to $20 billion worth of non-game merchandise sales for Nintendo worldwide, said Gail Tilden, a Nintendo vice president.

Already in Japan, where Kirby marketing efforts have a year headstart on the rest of the world, sales of non-game Kirby merchandise are expected to hit $150 million to $200 million this year, she said.

What's Kirby about? He's a Warpstar knight in training. After crash landing on the planet Popstar, he becomes the sworn protector of Dream Land, where all the happy dreams in the universe originate. He can inhale the various special powers of his enemies and then use them against them. He says very little - only parroting a few words here and there. And children especially like his taste-of-your-own-medicine special powers.

Kids like that although Kirby can turn tough when he needs to be, he's still "so unassuming," said Tilden. "He's like a pink round ball."

Well, he is a pink round ball.

And much of the responsibility of turning the ball into a sensation is on Tilden and Nintendo brand manager Melinda Porter.

The two oversee the marketing efforts for Kirby in North America and Europe, while a Nintendo joint venture in Japan handles the Asian market.

But building a star has taken months of effort on even the smallest of details. The two spent six weeks poring over hundreds of logo designs, whittling them down to the final pink, burgundy and yellow logo (the colors appeal to boys as well as girls, Tilden notes).

They've lined up a fast-food partner (which they won't disclose yet) to include a Kirby toy in a kid's meal later this year. They're working with merchandisers on selling everything from toys to pajamas. They're planning the release of a home video in November and a new Kirby video game in December.

And they're working closely with New York-based 4Kids Entertainment, which is handling the Saturday morning cartoon for Nintendo in the United States.

The Kirby show is part of Fox's revamped approach to Saturday morning
programming, with the network leasing the programming block to 4Kids
Entertainment. NBC has a similar deal with the Discovery Channel.

The network moves were prompted by the increasing competition from
kid-oriented niche cable networks like Nickelodeon. Fox and NBC, in
particular, have experienced declining Saturday morning ratings.

The verdict on whether Kirby will make it, of course, ultimately rests
with the audience.

"Nintendo's been a genius at developing these characters," said Schelley
Olhava, senior analyst with International Data Corp.

Still, Nintendo's $10 million bet isn't a sure thing.

"For every Pokemon or Mario that's been successful, I'm sure there's a
bunch of characters that haven't gone anywhere," she said.

                        Game Company Wins Against Nudity

Game maker Tecmo has won a court case against an unnamed Japanese firm
which sold a CD that allowed players to remove the clothing from female
characters in the PlayStation 2 version of Dead Or Alive 2. This disc
effectively allowed characters to play completely nude. The disc allowed
the user to download "modified" nudie character models for several female
characters in the game, which were then saved to the PS2's memory card.

Tecmo has won damages of 2 million yen against the small firm. Across both
the Dreamcast and PlayStation 2, Dead or Alive 2 has sold almost 1.5
million worldwide since it was released in March 2000.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
   """"""""""""""""""""

                        Greek Government Bans e-games

The Greek government has banned all electronic games across Greece,
including those in home computers, Game Boy-style portable consoles, and
on mobile phones. Law Number 3037, enacted at the end of July, explicitly
forbids electronic games with 'electronic mechanisms and software' from
public and private places, and people have already been fined tens of
thousands of euros for playing or owning games.

Internet cafes are allowed to continue to operate, providing all gaming is
prohibited: if a client is found to be running any sort of game, including
online chess, the cafe owner will be fined and the place closed.

Greek Government Bans All Computer Games

The government of Greece is making heroic efforts to humiliate the nation
in front of the entire world, by banning all electronic games. That's
right; something as innocent as playing computer chess on your laptop in a
hotel lobby is now a crime with penalties of up to three months in stir
and a fine of 10,000 euros.

The purpose behind this charming legislation is to crack down on Internet
gambling (which already was illegal) -- or, rather, to enable legislators
to enact their little public dance of righteous aversion to Internet
gambling.

Improved enforcement of existing law is all that was needed, but there's a
problem. Unfortunately, the Greek government is "incapable of
distinguishing innocuous video games from illegal gambling machines,"
according to an older article from the English-language Kathimerini
newspaper, written while the bill was under consideration.

Now it's official. The legislature has concluded that all electronic games
have got to go because the bureaucrats they're maintaining on the public
payroll aren't swift enough to figure out the difference between video
poker and TuXkart. Perhaps enforcing literacy requirements and sobriety
regulations for government workers would have been a more productive
approach, but it's too late for that now.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Attacks Yield New Surveillance Laws

Governments worldwide have made it easier for authorities to augment
citizen databases and eavesdrop on telephone and online conversations in
order to fight terror, according to a survey of privacy regulations
released Tuesday.

The report, written by privacy activists Electronic Privacy Information
Center and Privacy International, show the United States was not alone
in passing new laws that value increased security over personal privacy.

"It's a general theme toward total identification," said Sarah Andrews, an
author of the report. "When you're outside in public or when you're online,
you can be identified."

That dismays privacy groups, who worry about free speech restrictions and
abuses of power. They have fought new laws like the U.S. anti-terror
legislation that lowered the bar on surveillance requirements by

authorities.

"They haven't been backed up by evidence that law enforcement and intelligence agencies were hampered before because they didn't have these powers," Andrews said.

Stewart Baker, a former general counsel for the National Security Agency, said increased data sharing might have helped identify the Sept. 11 hijackers.

He said many surveillance proposals were already moving toward passage, and speeded up by legitimized fears of a terrorist threat.

"They're really complaining about changes in the world rather than changes in the law," said Baker, now a lawyer with Steptoe & Johnson in Washington.

In addition to the United States, the report listed new anti-terrorism legislation in Australia, Austria, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Singapore and Sweden.

In June of this year, the European Union allowed its member states to require that Internet providers retain traffic and location data of all people using any electronic communications device, like mobile phones, faxes, e-mails, chat rooms or the Internet.

The Russian internal security service recently tried to order all Internet providers to install surveillance software, at the company's cost, so that police could perform instant searches without a warrant. After an Internet company sued, a Russian court decided the rule was unconstitutional.

There also is increased interest in personal surveillance through biometric technology and spy cameras. The report lists the use of cameras at the Super Bowl in Tampa, Fla., to search for suspected terrorists. Perhaps no country likes such cameras more than Britain, where an estimated 1.5 million cameras watch public streets and parks.

The report found that governments also want to merge their existing databases, such as those for social programs and traffic infractions, to create profiles to catch suspected terrorists.

Many of the proposals, the report notes, had been proposed and rejected for years. Only after the terror attacks, it said, did they gain acceptance.

"The environment was ripe for these things to go through without the necessary debate," Andrews said. "People weren't asking the same questions anymore."

The report doesn't just show invasions of privacy, however. Several countries in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America have new laws to protect personal data from unauthorized disclosure. Finland, Sweden and Russia are working on regulations to protect privacy in the workplace.

The United States recently has brought action against companies that inadvertently leak personal information.

Magazine publisher Ziff-Davis last month agreed to pay three states a total of $100,000 after an Internet security breach that exposed subscriber information, and Microsoft recently made changes to its Internet services after the Federal Trade Commission worried that its security was too loose to protect customer data.

"Before, people were barely held to account for things they were doing deliberately," Andrews said. "Now, there is more accountability for even accidental disclosures."

Study: Most Support Government Web Action

More than two-thirds of Americans say it's OK for government agencies to remove public information from the Internet, even though many didn't believe it would make a difference in fighting terrorism, a new study finds.

But Americans were evenly divided on whether governments should be able to monitor e-mail and Web activities, with 47 percent opposed and 45 percent in support.

"When it gets close to common, everyday things they do, their guard gets a little higher," said Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, which conducted the telephone-based survey released Thursday.

Since Sept. 11, several federal and state government agencies have removed documents, maps and other resources from the Internet out of concern the materials could aid terrorists.

The stricken items include federal environmental reports on chemical plants and their emergency response plans; mapping software showing communications infrastructure in Pennsylvania; and data on drinking water and natural gas pipelines in the United States.

Many of the removed documents remained available offline in government reading rooms or even online, housed at other, non-government sites. Some items have since been restored by the government.

According to the Pew survey, 67 percent of Americans believe the U.S. government should remove information that might potentially aid terrorists, even if the public has a right to know. Twenty-three percent believe the government should leave the information up, with the remainder not knowing or not answering.

Of those favoring removal, 36 percent said doing so would have no effect on terrorism. Overall, 47 percent of Americans felt that way, compared with 41 percent who thought it would help hinder terrorism.

Internet users were more likely to oppose monitoring and believe that information removal would not make a difference.

"It certainly is significant that our society which has always prided itself on open access of information is now so scared of what open access to information means," said David Greene, executive director of the nonprofit First Amendment Project in Oakland, Calif.

Greene said Americans may not believe the information is personally useful.

"People think, 'I'm not going to poison the water supply system, so what do I need to know about the water supply system?'" Greene said. "But if all of a sudden they are part of an effort to restrict development of a watershed and need that data ... all of a sudden they realize it's important."

Meanwhile, the Pew study found that the attacks continued to affect Internet behavior a year later.

Eighty-three percent of Americans who used e-mail to renew contact with family and friends soon after Sept. 11 maintained those relationships throughout the year.

Internet users have also obtained news, visited government sites and made donations online more frequently, with a large number citing the attacks as the major reason for change.

The telephone survey of 2,501 adults, including 1,527 Internet users, was conducted June 26 to July 26. The margin of sampling error was 2 percentage points for the full sample, 3 percentage points for questions asked of Internet users only.

China Blocks Google Search Engine

China has blocked access to popular U.S. Internet search engine Google web site) amid government calls to tighten media controls ahead of a major Communist Party congress.

Attempts to look at the site through Chinese Internet services on Tuesday were rejected with a notice saying it couldn't be found. Users and technical consultants who monitor the Chinese Internet said the site has been blocked for several days.

"We were notified by our users that access to Google in China had been blocked. We are working with Chinese authorities to resolve the issue," said Google spokeswoman Cindy McCaffrey.

She had no further information about what the discussion with Chinese authorities might involve or when Google access within China might be restored.

The government is preparing to hold a congress in November that is expected to begin shifting power to a new generation of leaders. China routinely tightens controls on news and information around politically sensitive dates, and state media quoted President Jiang Zemin in August as telling propaganda officials to create a "sound atmosphere" for the meeting.

Google is hugely popular among China's 45 million Internet users because of its wide-ranging search capacity. A search in English for Jiang's name turns up links to 156,000 Web sites mentioning him.

By contrast, a search on Sina.com, another portal that is popular in China, turns up just 1,600 mentions of Jiang. The Chinese-language service of American search engine Yahoo! turns up just 24 results.

Nor does Google weed out material that the Chinese government blocks as subversive.

A search for Jiang on Google turns up a Web page posted by the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement entitled "Exposing the crimes of Jiang Zemin." The group accuses Jiang of killing its followers in the course of a crackdown aimed at eliminating the group, viewed as a threat to communist

control.

China promotes the Internet for economic use and to spread the communist
government's views. But it has worked hard to muzzle the Internet as a
forum for free information and discussion.

Authorities apply blocks to prevent Internet users from viewing sites run
by Falun Gong, human rights groups and some foreign news organizations.

Police monitor chat rooms and personal e-mail and erase online content
considered undesirable. Internet portals have been warned they will be held
responsible for sites they host.

Nevertheless, many users find ways to get around the blocks, said Duncan
Clark, a technology analyst for consulting firm BDA China.

They often involve using "proxy servers" - Web sites abroad that let users
reach blocked sites. Such techniques are routinely posted online in China
or exchanged in chat rooms.

"The restrictions only make people more creative," Clark said.

Consumer Groups Want FTC to Halt Spam

Three consumer groups Wednesday angrily launched a petition drive to ask
the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to stop deceptive and unsolicited
commercial junk e-mail, or spam, from filling the in-boxes of Internet
users.

At a press conference held at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C.,
the groups charged that the unregulated flow of millions of commercial
e-mail messages sent out daily by marketing companies harms consumers
through fraud and frustration.

Samuel Simon, chairman of the nonprofit Telecommunications Research and
Action Center in Washington, said the FTC must take action "to halt the
outrageous excesses of bulk e-mail senders."

TRAC was joined by the Washington-based National Consumers League and the
San Francisco-based nonprofit group Consumer Action in unveiling
Banthespam.com, a Web site where consumers can log their comments and
negative experiences about receiving unwanted spam. The comments will be
sent to the FTC for their review as part of a massive online petition the
consumer groups hope to use to get the FTC to act.

Simon said the groups want the FTC to use its powers under the Federal
Trade Act to deal with unregulated e-mail transmissions from marketing
companies.

Under proposed rules that the consumer groups want enacted, it would be
unlawful and deceptive to misrepresent the sender of a commercial e-mail
message, as well as to misrepresent the subject of the e-mail in the
header or title. It would also be unlawful to send commercial e-mail
messages without reliable and accurate contact information, to make it
difficult for recipients to remove their names from a sender's e-mail
lists, or to leave a recipient's name on an e-mail list after the
recipient has asked that it be removed.

"We need your help, and we urge everyone to go to Banthespam.com and be heard," Simon said. "This is your chance to do something about it."

Susan Grant, the National Consumers League's vice president for public policy, said that FTC action is needed because of the constant assault consumers face in their in-boxes from marketers pushing work-at-home schemes, phony credit card offers, and other frauds, as well as products from Viagra to pornography.

"The Federal Trade Commission needs to stop the epidemic now... before it gets completely out of hand and kills the online marketplace," she said.

An FTC spokesman declined to comment Wednesday morning. But the agency issued a statement from J. Howard Beales III, the director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

In his statement, Beales said the agency is concerned about the problem and will review the petitions from the three consumer groups. "We have brought numerous cases against deceptive and misleading spam practices, and that's exactly what we'll continue to do," he said.

Anti-Spam Group Off to Rocky Start

A consumer group lobbying to outlaw unwanted spam e-mails sent by companies opened its campaign Wednesday with a new Web site but quickly had to fix a technical glitch that suggested visitors might unwittingly be added to the group's own e-mail list.

The Telecommunications Research and Action Center said it never intended to send visitors unwanted e-mails and blamed the problem on an erroneous message created by the Web designer.

"The guy that put it up didn't understand it real well," TRAC chairman Sam Simon said.

Simon said the problem, which was brought to the group's attention by The Associated Press, was fixed quickly and that none of the visitors during the Web site's first day ever received unsolicited e-mails.

"We never spammed anyone. And we never intended to add anyone to our database. We corrected it within moments of learning of the problem," he said.

But even after Simon said the problem was fixed, the site continued to have similar problems with the reply message Wednesday afternoon until it was fixed again.

Only visitors who opt to receive the group's informational e-mails by checking a box on the Web page will be receive e-mails. Simon said.

The Web site, banthespam.com, encourages Internet users to share their spam horror stories and add their names to a petition asking federal regulators to crack down on spam e-mailers.

Before the error was fixed, an Internet user who visited the site but chose

not to receive e-mail updates from TRAC was greeted with the message: "You are currently signed up for news and information."

TRAC and the other groups, Consumer Action and the National Consumers League, want the Federal Trade Commission to sue marketers that send spam without authentic return addresses or send e-mails to someone who has opted out of receiving the messages.

In a statement, the FTC said it is concerned about the proliferation of spam and plans to review the petition. The FTC has an e-mail address, uce@ftc.gov, where Internet users can forward offensive junk e-mail. That address gets about 10,000 such e-mails a day, the FTC says.

In March and April, the FTC shut down several Internet marketing operations that used deceptive spam. In one case, commission lawyers said the e-mails enticed victims into paying $11 million in hidden telephone charges.

Judge Blocks Sale of Napster

A bankruptcy judge blocked the sale of Napster Inc. to Bertelsmann AG on Tuesday, killing a deal that might have revived the idled Internet music pioneer as a legitimate music-sharing network.

Judge Peter J. Walsh, in Wilmington, Del., cited conflicting loyalties by Napster's top executive.

Napster CEO Konrad Hilbers, a Bertelsmann veteran, said the judge's decision likely will force Napster to change its reorganization effort into a Chapter 7 liquidation.

"Napster is disappointed with the bankruptcy court's decision not to approve the sale of the company's assets to Bertelsmann. As a result of the record companies' and music publishers' opposition, Napster's creditors will be denied substantial repayment and the company will likely be forced into Chapter 7 liquidation," Hilbers said in a statement.

Bertelsmann had sought to purchase the remains of the defunct Napster network for an additional $8 million after having already sunk $85 million into the Redwood City-based company to keep it afloat. Napster has been off line for more than a year and filed for bankruptcy protection in June.

Suits by several major record labels effectively destroyed Napster. Those record companies also filed motions in the bankruptcy case, vigorously objecting to the sale of the company to Bertelsmann, Germany's biggest media company.

Hilbers' divided allegiance between Napster and Bertelsmann drew scrutiny from Walsh as he looked at the proposed sale. The judge said he wanted to hear from someone who was in on negotiations, especially Hilbers. But Hilbers never took the stand and did not attend hearings on the bankruptcy matter.

The judge also cited an e-mail sent by Hilbers to Bertelsmann executives in which Hilbers confirmed his decision making as head of Napster always was driven by what was best for Bertelsmann.

A&M Records, Geffen Records, Interscope Records and other labels objected

to the proposed Bertelsmann buyout, citing a reticence on the German media giant's part to turn over documents related to the loans and relationships between Napster and Bertelsmann.

The record companies questioned Bertelsmann's financing of an operation found to violate copyright infringement by U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel in California.

"The $72.5 million in funding provided by Bertelsmann to Napster was advanced, in each case, in a lump sum and without any procedures put in place to ensure that it would not be used to run Napster's illegal copyright infringement business," the record labels said in a recent court filing.

Napster's song swap servers have been down since July 2001, after a series of punishing rulings by Patel that Napster comply with her order to completely rid its network of unauthorized copyright recordings.

Bertelsmann issued a short statement Tuesday, acknowledging it would not buy the assets of the startup company that changed the way millions of computer users acquired and listened to music.

"We accept the court's decision that the sale of Napster's assets to Bertelsmann has been denied and that the purchase process will not proceed," Bertelsmann said.

Phil Leigh, an analyst for Raymond James & Associates who has followed the Napster saga through the courts, said the dwindling assets of the company could still bring a price if the record labels relent and allow access to their music catalogs. Without such access, Napster is dead and its value is in question, Leigh said.

"The determination of that value is really in the hands of the record companies," Leigh said. "Whoever gobbles it up can do nothing unless they gain access to content."

"It's like having a jet engine without wings. The airplane just won't fly."

Napster use peaked with 13.6 million users in February 2001, according to comScore Media Metrix. The service went offline less than six months later, and the five largest record labels combined to form two subscription online music services, MusicNet and pressplay, to pick up the slack.

Morpheus, KaZaA and Gnutella networks, other free file-sharing avenues, still flourish on the Internet allowing the trade of various multimedia files.

Napster Goes Unmourned to the Grave

Like so many one-hit wonders before it, the demise of the once iconic online song-swapping service Napster has failed to stir much sympathy.

"Really, who cares?" Sebastian, a student at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany, told Reuters as he heard that Napster would likely be forced into Chapter 7 liquidation as early as Thursday.

"Everybody's moved on to other file-sharing (services). The interest for

Napster in the Internet community just wasn't as high as everybody originally thought," said the 28-year old student of IT engineering.

During its heyday in 2000, Napster attracted tens of millions of music fans who traded all manners of recorded music from Eminem singles to rare concert recordings of the Dave Matthews Band.

To the chagrin of the media establishment, Napster introduced the concept of file-trading to a generation of youths who now exchange a wide range copyright-protected materials from feature-length movies to video games, drawing Hollywood and lawmakers into the fray to corral the activity.

While the legacy of Napster thrives, the service itself became a non-entity as it shut down a year ago amid mounting legal troubles. Thursday, Net discussion groups were largely devoid of commentary on the online service that major music labels once considered to be public enemy number one.

"Well, it's official," read one discussion group posting, summing up a demise that has long had an air of inevitability -- as an underground service it was a hit, but as a business it had no chance.

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, one of Napster's chief nemeses, gave a bitter-sweet obituary to the defunct service.

"Napster had a great technology but it was never going to be successful until it managed to turn that technology into a legitimate business model that respected the copyright of artists and record companies," the IFPI said in a statement.

Napster's fate was sealed Wednesday when a U.S. bankruptcy court rejected German media group Bertelsmann's bid to buy Napster. Record labels and songwriters had opposed the deal, saying the price was unfair.

The decision leaves Napster, which had been grounded since July, 2001, with no choice but to pull the plug on the operation.

Napster, which still has a large copyright-infringement suit hanging over its head from the labels, is expected to file for Chapter 7 liquidation Thursday, sources said.

A statement from Napster Wednesday said the company had fired staff and shut down the operation. A trustee will auction off Napster's assets that include its globally recognized brand name, Web addresses and proprietary technologies.

The Napster Web Site now consists of two pages -- "Napster was here" on the home page, linking only to a crude tombstone bearing the trademark headphone-wearing cat and the legend "Ded kitty."

Wednesday, officials at some of the music labels told Reuters they did not think the fall of Napster would have any meaningful impact on the file-sharing and music piracy craze.

The labels may have triggered Napster's demise, but it leaves behind a more powerful crop of imitators including Morpheus MusicCity, Grokster and Kazaa, sites which have succeeded in driving the activity further underground.

As a posting by a person nicknamed "PianoMan" said: "They will never stop it. Or even slow it down. And as you may have guessed, I'm not

sympathetic."

Henry Wilson, founder of Grokster, a peer-to-peer network named in a
lawsuit by Hollywood and the labels for copyright abuse, pointed out that
Napster went out of business before the courts could make a final ruling on
the legitimacy of file-sharing networks.

"I don't think you can say this is a win for (the labels) on the legal
front," Wilson told Reuters.

Judge Grants Madster Injunction

Saying the file-swapping service Madster appears to contribute to copyright
infringement "on a massive scale," a federal judge granted a preliminary
injunction against the service Wednesday.

The order issued from U.S. District Court in Chicago is a victory for
record companies, which claim Madster violates copyright law just as
Napster had before it. More than two dozen record and other media companies
are involved in the litigation against the Albany-based service formerly
know as Aimster.

"At issue is a service whose very raison d'etre appears to be the
facilitation of and contribution to copyright infringement on a massive
scale," Chief Judge Marvin Aspen wrote in his order granting the companies'
request for a preliminary injunction.

Aspen gave the companies suing Madster until next week to propose
language for a "narrowly tailored" injunction that would end copyright
infringement "while allowing non-infringing uses of the Aimster system,
if any, to continue."

Madster founder Johnny Deep said he had not seen Aspen's opinion. But he
said he didn't think there was a lot of copyrighted material shared on
Madster. He said he didn't know of a way to block only copyrighted files
because the transferred material is encrypted.

"We couldn't possibly filter, at least that I know of," he said.

The Recording Industry Association of America, a trade group for the record
companies, said all Madster's arguments were rejected by the judge.

"This unequivocal ruling today underscores that companies and individuals
will not be permitted to build a business on music they do not own and will
be held responsible for their actions," said RIAA Chairman Hilary Rosen.

Attorneys for the record and media companies plan to promptly submit
proposed injunction language to the Chicago court. They also plan to file a
motion for summary judgment next week in Los Angeles federal court in a
pending suit against several other file-sharing companies.

While acknowledging they don't know how many files shared on Madster are
copyrighted, an RIAA official said 87 percent of Napster's former content
was infringing and it is probably about the same.

Madster started as a free service that allows users to trade music and
other types of files over the Internet. The site now offers a $4.95-a-month

"Club Madster" subscription service that offers file recommendations made by other members and other extras.

A series of suits and countersuits regarding Madster were consolidated in Chicago, although that litigation was stayed in March after bankruptcy filings were made by Deep and two companies involved in the service's operations. The recording companies are seeking damages.

A bankruptcy judge in Albany lifted the stay for the limited purpose of allowing plaintiffs to ask a federal judge in Chicago to decide on the preliminary injunction motion.

Madster dropped its old Aimster name as part of a settlement agreement with America Online.

Can Apple's Jaguar Break Windows?

Smashing previous sales records for any operating system released by Apple, OS X version 10.2, code-named Jaguar, charged through the 100,000 mark on its recent release as over 50,000 people visited 35 retail stores across the United States to scoop up the new title.

Touting the operating system's 150 new features and applications, Apple's Jaguar launch is a major element in the company's "Switch" campaign, started earlier this summer to entice disgruntled Windows users to the Mac side.

Highlights of Jaguar include increased speed, easier connection to Windows networks, a Rendezvous program that allows for messages to be sent across a network of other 10.2 users, and an e-mail spam filter that learns as it goes.

But even with all the Jaguar fanfare, the marketing campaigns and the individual stories of redemption, the big question remains: Does the improved operating system pose a serious threat to Windows' dominance among consumers and in the enterprise?

"We see an incredible momentum behind the switch campaign, and Jaguar is a big piece of that. It has a lot of innovative features in it, and it's making people stand up and take notice," Brian Croll, Apple's senior director of software, worldwide product marketing, told NewsFactor.

Even before the release of Jaguar, Apple had already met with some success with its switch campaign. Apple CEO Steve Jobs told an audience in New York at July's Macworld trade show that over 1.7 million unique visitors had come to the "Switch" Web site, and that fully 60 percent had logged in from Windows machines.

While Apple will not release figures indicating how many people it estimates have made the jump, Croll said the company has compiled enough anecdotal evidence to support the contention that the campaign has snagged new customers.

But whether enough Windows users will make the leap, as a result of Jaguar, to impact Windows' market share is less certain. Analysts cite Microsoft's current dominance over Apple -- nearly 95 percent desktop share versus an estimated 4 percent, respectively, according to IDC and Giga Information

Group figures -- as the primary hurdle.

"I think there is so much [other software] tied around Windows that it's safe on the desktop," Yankee Group senior analyst Rob Perry told NewsFactor.

Perry noted that a major segment of home users consists of those whose PCs are set up as extensions of their work desktops, which are overwhelmingly Windows-based. Because of a perceived need on their part to use the same applications and the same type of connectivity at home as in the office, it is unlikely that this group would make the switch, according to Perry.

Al Gillen, director of infrastructure software research at IDC, told NewsFactor that he believes the challenge of persuading the market to switch from Windows to Jaguar has less to do with the strength of the product than with battling a giant.

"The problem is not a product quality issue [or] the compelling nature of the product. It's that somebody else already owns the market. Somehow, you have to wrest market share from them," said Gillen.

"It's a battle that has been lost over the last 10 years. And to go back and begin to reclaim market share is very, very hard to do," he added.

With the release of Jaguar, the Cupertino, California company became among the largest Unix retailers in the world, and has credited Unix with its ability to add features to the OS very rapidly.

"We've gone to a Unix-based core, and because of this we handle all the enterprise standards extremely well," said Apple's Croll. "A lot of enterprises out there have a Unix infrastructure, and as a result, we plug in very well."

Croll also noted the compatibility of Jaguar in the Windows environment, with Macs now easily able to plug into Windows networks, both on-site and remotely, as well as share files in both directions.

On the commercial side, Apple has also released its Unix-based Jaguar server operating system, OS X Server 10.2, which features new tools to simplify administration and support of Mac OS X systems.

"From a pricing standpoint, when you buy an X Serve you get Mac OS X and you get all the clients you need. You don't have to pay extra on a per-client basis," said Croll. "You pay once, you bought the server and you use it for as many clients as you need."

This type of liberal licensing structure is what Apple hopes could attract more of Microsoft's enterprise users.

Under Microsoft's new licensing structure, businesses pay regular installments in exchange for the ability to upgrade applications at any given time, versus a traditional one-time flat fee with optional upgrades thereafter. Companies had until July 31st to take advantage of special upgrade pricing before the licensing fee took effect.

The plan, which tends to be more expensive, has upset some Microsoft customers. According to a recent IDC survey, as many as 38 percent said they had investigated alternatives to Windows, including Linux and Mac.

But whether any companies will take the bait has yet to be determined. Analysts said they witnessed increased interest among clients before the

upgrade deadline, but any immediate switches seemed less certain.

"I don't think Microsoft is any danger here. I think a combination of their licensing changes and viable competition from Apple and Linux will get some people to move [away from Windows]. But I don't think it's going to be a massive amount," said Yankee Group's Perry.

"What customers have told me is that they're looking at alternatives," Gillen said. But no one, he added, feels as though they yet have a viable alternative to the Windows desktop for their infrastructure.

AOL Unveils a Slim, Trim ICQ

If size matters, someone forgot to tell America Online's ICQ instant messaging division. It is releasing ICQ Lite, a condensed version of its popular IM program with uncharacteristically few features.

ICQ Lite has only 14 core features, a fraction of the 40 functions in ICQ 2002. The newest release bucks the bigger-is-better trend among IM competitors. Microsoft and Yahoo, for example, have been fattening their instant messenger clients with multimedia and enhanced communications add-ons upon each new release.

The short list of ICQ Lite's just-the-basics features includes same-time text messaging, the ability to send and receive text messages on mobile phones, file transfer functions, and access to ICQ's user directory for finding people of like interests. In addition, the program saps less of your system memory when it runs.

"We have put our most popular features in a smaller and simpler package," says Ronen Arad, ICQ product manager. ICQ Lite will not replace full versions like the company's latest, ICQ 2002a. Instead, ICQ Lite is aimed at users unfamiliar with instant messaging. Arad says the small size of the ICQ Lite program will also appeal to advanced ICQ users who appreciate software that doesn't tap too much of a PC's resources.

ICQ Lite brings some new features to the table, as well. You can now choose to filter out unsolicited messages with an optional ICQ chat filter. And if an inappropriate message sneaks through, you can report the chat spammer to ICQ administrators who will consider adding repeat offenders to a list of users who may be filtered.

The smaller version also adds a typing indicator, which alerts you when the other person is typing. It also supports so-called natural language queries that let you cross-reference the ICQ user directory as easily as typing "poodle owners living in Milwaukee."

Only Windows systems can run ICQ Lite. You can run both the Lite version and the full ICQ on the same PC without conflict. ICQ Lite will be introduced first in English with additional language support following soon, Arad says.

Consistent with the feature reductions, ICQ has trimmed the file size for ICQ Lite to 1.7MB, down from 3.9MB for the full version. The leaner ICQ Lite drains only about 5MB of your PC's system resources when it runs, in contrast to the full version's 15MB requirement, ICQ says.

The introduction of a leaner ICQ runs contrary to recent offerings from chat competitors Microsoft and Yahoo. In August, for instance, Yahoo introduced Webcam support for Yahoo Messenger. Meanwhile, Microsoft has been building bridges into MSN Messenger that connect to its.Net platform for e-commerce and for collaboration tools like whiteboards.

Analysts say all of the competitors in this niche are trying to distinguish their messaging applications with more features.

ICQ is clearly taking a different tack, says Michael Gartenberg, a research director at Jupiter Research. Instead of becoming more complicated, ICQ is taking the "Zen approach of simplicity," he says. By keeping things uncomplicated, ICQ is hoping that new users will find ICQ Lite more approachable, he says.

However, it may take more than Zen-like ease of use for ICQ to keep up with the messaging behemoths within the United States. The top spot currently belongs to AOL's AIM service. (AOL and ICQ share the same parent company, AOL Time Warner.) In second place is MSN Messenger, with Yahoo in third, according to the most recent data available from Jupiter.

Those numbers indicate that ICQ is struggling. In 2001 ICQ saw a 13 percent decrease in the number of users of its instant messaging service, from about 9 million to 8 million. However, ICQ instant messaging software remains very popular in Europe and elsewhere outside the United States.

Still, much is at stake in the U.S. chat market, where 48 percent of Internet users have yet to begin swapping instant missives, Gartenberg says. Another quickly growing market for instant messaging is behind company firewalls, where employees are increasingly turning to instant messaging as a business communication tool.

Intuit Uses Anti-Piracy Measures

Intuit Inc. has introduced new anti-piracy measures that will force buyers of its popular TurboTax software to register their computers with the company before the program will file tax returns.

The new requirements, announced Thursday and effective for the next tax-filing season, are part of Intuit's crackdown on TurboTax buyers who pass around copies of the tax preparation software to their friends, family and neighbors.

Intuit believes the software sharing is undercutting its TurboTax sales, although the company hasn't estimated how much it might be losing.

The Mountain View-based company sold 5.3 million copies of TurboTax's desktop product in its fiscal year ended in July. That's more than any other tax preparation program.

The new measures will corral critical TurboTax features on a single computer that must be registered with the company, either through the Internet or an automated phone center.

After a new copy of the desktop TurboTax is installed on a computer, the user will need to send a code listed on the CD or package to identify the program. After Intuit verifies the software and registers the computer

using the program, the company will send back an activation code.

The activation code must be entered into the computer to print copies or electronically file any tax returns created with the program.

A single TurboTax program can still be used to produce multiple tax returns. A single program also be moved from computer to computer to enter tax data and review tax forms.

But the final returns can only be printed or electronically filed from the computer with the activation code.

TurboTax users with Internet connections will be able to register their computers and get an activation code in about a minute, Intuit said. TurboTax users without access to the Internet - a segment that made up just 1 percent of last year's buyers - will have to go through a more cumbersome process on a touch-tone telephone.

The concept of registering a personal computer is bound to irritate and perhaps even unnerve some TurboTax users worried about personal privacy, predicted technology industry analyst Rob Enderle of the Giga Information Group.

"Nobody trusts companies these days. They don't want to send them any kind of information," Enderle said.

Intuit guarantees it won't collect information about the computer system or the owner during the registration process. "It's totally anonymous," said TurboTax spokesman Scott Gulbransen said. "If we didn't have people's trust, we couldn't stay in business."

Intuit met little resistance when it tested the anti-piracy measures in Canada during the past tax-filing season, Gulbransen said.

Enderle thinks Intuit is trying to encourage more desktop users of TurboTax to change their ways and subscribe to the online version. The online version saves the company money by avoiding the packaging and shipping costs of desktop CDs.

About 2.1 million tax filers used TurboTax's online edition in the year ending in July.

Intuit says it's just trying to protect its legal rights and maximize sales. "This should be very good for our retail channels," Gulbransen said.

                        Report: Few Advertisers Use Pop-Ups

Though they seem to be everywhere on the Internet, pop-up advertisements are used by less than 10 percent of all companies that advertise online, according to a report from Nielsen//NetRatings.

Between January and July of 2002, companies bought 11.3 billion pop-up ad impressions, but that figure represents just 2 percent of the overall online ad market.

"Pop-ups quickly gained notoriety since their introduction in early 2001,"

said Charles Buchwalter, vice president of client analytics at Nielsen//NetRatings. "Consumers may be surprised to find out that pop-up advertising comprises such a small percent of the total ad market."

The small number of users and the potential for consumer backlash might help spell the demise of the format over time. Many analysts see pop-up ads as part of a transition from staid banner advertising to more dynamic -- but less annoying -- online ad formats.

Denise Garcia, research director at GartnerG2, told the E-Commerce Times that the Web will become a medium favored for brand-building, positioning and traffic gains.

"Internet advertising is growing up, and there's going to be growing pains," she said. "Eventually, Internet ads will look a lot more like television ads, and people will know what to expect when they go online."

In the meantime, consumers may be able to target their angst about pop-up ads, Buchwalter said. NetRatings found that just 63 companies were responsible for 80 percent of all pop-up advertising. The other 20 percent of pop-up ads came from more than 2,000 advertisers who use the format more sparingly.

Niche sites favor pop-ups and use them primarily to drive traffic to their sites rather than to build brand awareness. "Broader categories such as portals, search engines and shopping sites have shied away from utilizing the technology," Buchwalter said.

Wireless device seller X10.com, which was among the first online sites to use pop-up ads to drive traffic last year, continues to buy the most pop-up ads. The company has purchased more than 1 billion ads so far this year, well ahead of airline-backed travel site Orbitz, which bought 687 million pop-up impressions.

Rounding out the top five were Providian Financial with 679 million impressions, real estate and travel giant Cendant with 561 million, and Cassava Enterprises with 548 million. Also in the top 10: Dell, Bonzi Software, Morgan Stanley, Columbia House and Advertising.com.

"A few advertisers clearly view the benefits of pop-up advertising as greater than the potential harm to brand image," Buchwalter said. "We anticipate that the continuing negativity surrounding pop-ups will lead to new ad designs that are less intrusive and more responsive to consumer expectations."

Boston Woos Macworld Expo, Decision Expected Soon

The Boston Globe technology writer Hiawatha Bray reports today that Framingham, Mass.-based IDG World Expo -- coordinator of the Macworld Conference & Expo trade show -- is being lobbied by politicians and businesspeople in Boston to return the event to its home town beginning in 2004.

After nearly a decade and a half serving as Macworld Expo's east coast home, Boston lost Macworld Expo to New York City in the late 90s. Downtown chaos caused by the Big Dig construction project exacerbated an already bad situation -- the event had to be split between two venues because there

wasn't a convention center big enough to host the show, and hotel rooms in Boston were both scarce and expensive. Since then, Macworld Expo's summer event has been held at the Jacob K. Javits Center in New York City.

Since Macworld Expo moved to the Big Apple, construction has begun on a "super convention center" in Boston as the city and business investors have poured millions into renovating commercial and industrial zones in South Boston. The Big Dig's end is in sight, and the city's hotel room capacity has increased by some 3,000 rooms. Boston's new convention center -- twice the square footage of the Javits Center and larger even than Macworld Expo's West Coast home, San Francisco's Moscone Center -- is expected to open in 2004 and has already begun booking trade shows, though nowhere near its capacity. As a result, everyone from Boston's mayor to the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority itself is soliciting IDG World Expo to bring Macworld Expo back to Beantown.

To seal the deal, IDG World Expo Charlie Greco is looking for concessions, including free rent, reduced prices on utilities, catering and other services and guarantees of cheap hotel rooms. If it sounds like asking for the moon, consider that Macworld Expo is the biggest technology expo in New York and was the largest expo in Boston prior to its departure. Bray estimated that the show brought in about $60 million to Boston annually. With 50,000 or more visitors and hundreds of exhibitors attracted to the event, it's not hard to understand how it all adds up.

New York isn't giving up without a fight, according to Bray. They've already put their own deal forth and are giving IDG until September 13 to make up their minds. Greco wants Boston to lay its cards on the table no later than September 10 so IDG can compare.

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